

**SUBJECT: SUBPART D - PROGRAM and SERVICE COMPONENTS of a
STATEWIDE SYSTEM of EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES – Identification and
Evaluation**

AUTHORITY: 34 CFR 303.322 - evaluation and assessment; 34 CFR 303.323 -
nondiscriminatory procedures

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Evaluation

Evaluation means those procedures used by appropriate, qualified personnel to determine a child's initial and continuing eligibility for the Arizona Early Intervention Program.

Evaluations will be conducted by personnel who have been trained to use appropriate methods and procedures. Evaluation will be based on informed clinical opinion, and will include the following:

1. a review of pertinent records related to the child's current health status and medical history;
2. an evaluation of the child's level of functioning in each of the following developmental areas:
 - a. cognitive development
 - b. physical development, including vision and hearing
 - c. communication development
 - d. social or emotional development
 - e. adaptive development;

Evaluation:

- is timely, comprehensive and multidisciplinary
- is administered in the native language of the parents and child or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible;
- procedures and materials are selected and administered so as not to discriminate on the basis of race or culture;
- is conducted by qualified personnel (DES/AzEIP recommends that one of the evaluation team members represent the child's primary area of concern);
- is based on more than a single procedure as the criterion for determining a child's eligibility;
- incorporates parental input, including input regarding their child's functional abilities and current level of participation in the settings that the family identifies as natural or normal for the child and family, including home, neighborhood, and community settings in which children without disabilities participate.

AzEIP is not responsible for costs the family incurs in seeking a second opinion on evaluation findings.

Assessment

Assessment means ongoing procedures used by appropriate, qualified personnel throughout a child's period of eligibility to identify:

- the child's unique strengths and needs and the services appropriate to meet those needs; and
- the resources, priorities and concerns of the family and the identification of supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their infant or toddler with a disability.

Assessments will be conducted by personnel who have been trained to use appropriate methods and procedures. Assessment will be based on informed clinical opinion, and will include the following:

1. a review of pertinent records related to the child's current health status and medical history;
2. an evaluation of the child's level of functioning in each of the following developmental areas:
 - cognitive development
 - physical development, including vision and hearing
 - communication development
 - social or emotional development
 - adaptive development; and
3. an assessment of the unique needs of the child in terms of each of the developmental areas listed above, including the identification of services appropriate to meet those needs.

Assessment:

- is administered in the native language of the parents and child or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible;
- procedures and materials are selected and administered so as not to discriminate on the basis of race or culture;
- is conducted by qualified personnel;
- is shaped by family priorities for their child, as well as by child characteristics and diagnostic concerns;
- is conducted in the settings and under circumstances that have been selected by the family as most appropriate for their child (i.e., where their child will do best);
- incorporates parental input, including input regarding their child's functional abilities and current level of participation in the settings that the family identifies as natural or normal for the child and family, including home, neighborhood, and community settings in which children without disabilities participate and other input (as selected by the parents), including day care providers, grandparents, extended family members, friends, siblings.

AZEIP is not responsible for costs the family incurs in seeking a second opinion on assessment findings.

Family Assessment

A voluntary family assessment that is family-directed and designed to determine the resources, priorities and concerns of the family and the identification of the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the child and a family-directed identification of the needs of each child's family to appropriately assist in the development of the child may be conducted. Any family assessment will be voluntary on the part of the family, conducted by personnel trained to utilize appropriate methods and procedures, be based on information provided by the family through a personal interview, and incorporate the

family's description of its resources, priorities and concerns related to enhancing the child's development.

Nondiscriminatory Procedures

DES/AzEIP, in coordination with AzEIP service providing agencies, ensures the following:

- (1) tests and other evaluation materials are administered in the native language or other communication mode of the child/family unless clearly not feasible to do so;
- (2) assessment and evaluation procedures and materials are selected and administered so as not to discriminate on the basis of race or culture;
- (3) no single measure is used as the sole criterion for determining a child's eligibility; and
- (4) evaluations and assessments are conducted by qualified personnel.

Informed Clinical Opinion

DES/AzEIP, in coordination with AzEIP service providing agencies, ensures that informed clinical opinion is used in determining a child's eligibility for AzEIP. Informed clinical opinion is especially important if there are no standardized measures or if the standardized procedures are not appropriate for a given age or developmental area.

INTERAGENCY PLANNING

DES/AzEIP ensures that a timely, comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation is performed for all children who are potentially eligible, ages birth to 36 months. A family-directed identification of the needs of each child's family to appropriately assist the development of their infant or toddler is conducted.

DES/AzEIP ensures that the requirements for assessment and evaluation and nondiscriminatory procedures are implemented by all affected public agencies and service providers through interagency planning, implementation and monitoring with the AzEIP service providing agencies and their contractors. Each AzEIP service providing agency engages in the development, implementation, and monitoring of AzEIP policies and procedures regarding evaluation and assessment, and nondiscriminatory procedures.

INITIAL PLANNING PROCESS

The Initial Planning Process (IPP) includes referral, evaluation and assessment, eligibility determination, identification of family priorities, resources and concerns, and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development. The IPP is a seamless experience for families. The IPP lays the foundation for developing a collaborative relationship between the family and AzEIP through the giving and gathering of information.

Appropriate evaluations conducted prior to referral to AzEIP may be used to support eligibility determinations in conjunction with a review of medical records, parent reports, and observations. If current evaluations are not available, the IPP team lead will conduct/facilitate the appropriate evaluations and/or assessments necessary to determine eligibility and complete the initial IFSP. The IPP team works closely with local representatives from the AzEIP service providing agencies to ensure that eligibility for AzEIP and the AzEIP service providing agencies is determined simultaneously.

For a child who is eligible for AzEIP, the outcome of the IPP is the IFSP, which is built on an understanding of the child's developmental strengths and limitations within the context of the family's interactions, routines and activities; the family's priorities, resources and concerns; the desired outcomes for their family and child; and the community and AzEIP resources, supports, and services needed to facilitate attainment of those outcomes.

For a child who is not eligible for AzEIP, the IPP results in a better understanding of the child's developmental strengths, limitations, and next steps; practical strategies to support the child's development; and information about community resources that may be available and of interest to the family.

ELIGIBILITY

Personnel from the Department of Economic Security, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DES/DDD) and the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB) will determine eligibility for their respective agencies. Agency eligibility and AzEIP eligibility are two separate processes, as a child may be eligible for AzEIP, but not eligible to receive early intervention services from a particular agency.

Evaluation services purchased or funded by Part C facilitate the collection of information to support eligibility for an AzEIP service providing agency for children who are AzEIP eligible.

At the completion of the evaluation, if the child is determined eligible for AzEIP, the IPP team lead will assist the family to become enrolled with the appropriate agency or agencies and facilitate the transition to an ongoing service coordinator.

For children who are determined to be ineligible for services, the IPP team lead will assist the family in identifying community resources that may interest the family at the time that the child is determined ineligible. Community resources may include childcare, playgroups, library story time, informal and organized parent-to-parent support, and workshops through local schools, hospitals, childcare resource and referral, etc.

SERVICE COORDINATION

The IPP team lead fulfills the role of the child and family's service coordinator and, during the initial planning process, each child and family will be assigned to a primary agency. The purpose of assigning a primary agency is to ensure that families have only one ongoing service coordinator, though services may be provided through multiple agencies.

AZEIP SERVICE PROVIDING AGENCY ASSIGNMENT

The DES/DDD assumes the AzEIP service providing agency role for children who are eligible for DES/DDD by meeting its eligibility criteria.

ASDB will assume the AzEIP service providing agency role for children who have significant auditory and/or visual impairment, when it is the major disabling condition.

DES/AzEIP will assume the AzEIP service providing agency role for children who are eligible for AzEIP, but not eligible for DES/DDD or ASDB.

TIMELINES

DES/AzEIP assures that evaluation and initial assessment of the child and family and the development of an IFSP shall be conducted within 45 days of referral to DES/AzEIP, its contractors, any AzEIP service providing agency, or their contractors.

If exceptional circumstances make it impossible to complete the evaluation and assessment in 45 days, the IPP team lead, regardless of agency affiliation or funding source, shall document the reason in the child's record and ensure entry into the agency's database. As appropriate, an interim IFSP shall be developed as appropriate and consistent with §303.345 (b)(1) and (b)(2). An interim IFSP may be developed if:

- the child has obvious, immediate needs that are identified; and
- the requirements for the timely evaluation and assessment are not circumvented.